

ABSTRACT

Grade Retention, Attendant Strategies and Student Achievement in Two Primary Schools in Tobago

Vernice Caruth-Blake

This qualitative case study examined the practice of grade level retention as it is operationalized in two primary schools in Tobago. The study focused on the strategies that teachers use to improve the achievement of retained students. Data were obtained via interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Participants comprised the principals, teachers, students, and parents of two primary schools in Tobago. Among the findings were that: 1) providing an equal opportunity for each child means that the child must be given the chance to achieve based on ability, needs, and interests; 2) teachers need to understand why children from lower socio-economic backgrounds perform at a lower level than others; and 3) in order to nurture the learning potential of each child, teachers need to understand the influence of culture and social class on both school and students.

Keywords: Student achievement; Primary school students; Grade repetition; Classroom methods; Educational strategies; Teaching methods; Tobago; Case studies; Trinidad and Tobago